

REMARKS

This is intended as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated December 23, 2003, having a shortened statutory period for response set to expire on March 23, 2004. Please reconsider the claims pending in the application for reasons discussed below.

In the specification, the last paragraphs on page 7 and page 9 have been amended to correct minor editorial problems.

Claims 1-27 are pending in the application. Claims 1-4 and 6-28 remain pending following entry of this response. Claims 1-3 and 6-27 have been amended. Claim 5 has been cancelled. New claim 28 has been added to recite aspects of the invention. Applicants submit that the amendments and new claims do not introduce new matter.

Claim 6 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 for an insufficient antecedent basis. Claim 6 has been amended to depend from claim 3 to provide appropriate antecedent basis for the recited limitations. Therefore, Applicants submit that this rejection has been obviated.

Claims 1-5, 7-16 and 18-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Vajk et al.* (US 5,265,033) in view of *Edmonds et al.* (US 4,866,668). *Vajk et al.* disclose a primitive electronic mail system utilizing ATM or POS data communication systems. *Edmonds et al.* disclose a memory loading system for transferring data packets to a plurality of intercoupled modules.

Applicants contend that *Edmonds et al.* is non-analogous art and can not be relied on as a reference for the basis of rejecting the Applicants' claims. "In order to rely on a reference as a basis for rejection of an applicant's invention, the reference must either be in the field of applicant's endeavor or, if not, then be reasonably pertinent to the particular problem with which the inventor was concerned." *In re Oetiker*, 977 F.2d 1443, 1446, 24 USPQ2d 1443, 1445 (Fed. Cir. 1992). Whether a reference is analogous depends on the similarities and differences in structure and function of the inventions. *In re Ellis*, 476 F.2d 1370, 1372, 177 USPQ 526, 527 (CCPA 1973). Applicants submit that *Edmonds et al.* is not in the field of Applicants' endeavor and moreover, not reasonably pertinent to the particular problem with which the inventor was concerned. *Edmonds et al.* disclose a multiple memory loading system in which

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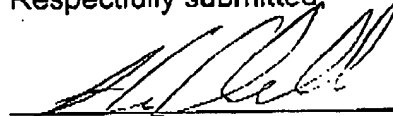
data packets are transmitted and stored between memories of a plurality of intercoupled modules. *Edmonds et al.* do not deal with electronic mail systems and processing of electronic mails, and the structures and functions of the memory loading system of *Edmonds et al.* bears no resemblance to the structure and functions of electronic mail systems. Therefore, Applicants submit that *Edmonds et al.* does not qualify as a reference for the basis of the rejections, and request withdraw of the rejections.

Furthermore, even if *Edmonds et al.* qualifies as a reference for the rejection, Applicants contend that the references cited by the Examiner, either alone or in combination, fail to teach, show or suggest an electronic mail processing system for receiving a first and a second cascade-type electronic mail messages, determining that a first cascade-type electronic mail message is related to a first cascade-type electronic mail messages and automatically forwarding the second cascade-type electronic mail messages one or more recipients who have been previously forwarded the first cascade-type electronic mail messages, as claimed. More particularly, the references cited by the Examiner, either alone or in combination, fail to teach, show or suggest determining a relationship between the first and second electronic mail messages and determining the list of recipients who should be automatically forwarded the second electronic mail message. Therefore, Applicants submit that the claims, as amended, are patentable over *Vajk et al.* in view of *Edmonds et al.* and request withdraw of the rejection.

Claim 17 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Vajk et al.* in view of *Edmonds et al.*, and further in view of *Doyle* (US 6,356,886). As discussed above, Applicants submit that *Edmonds et al.* does not qualify as a reference for the basis of the rejections and that, even if *Edmonds et al.* qualifies as a reference for the rejection, the references cited by the Examiner, either alone or in combination, fail to teach, show or suggest the claimed apparatus for processing electronic mail. Therefore, Applicants request withdraw of the rejection.

Having addressed all issues set out in the office action, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request that the claims be allowed.

Respectfully submitted,



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